

# *Executive Summary*



*"We do not own this land; we are caretakers of the land and the plant and animal species that inhabit it. The American people entrust the land to our care, and we shall fulfill their trust. We shall conserve and protect these resources for the future."<sup>2</sup>*

## **Purpose**

This Integrated Natural Resources Management Plan (INRMP) will guide the implementation of the natural resources program on Fort Greely, Alaska, from 1998 through 2002. The program is designed to conserve Fort Greely's land and natural resources and help ensure compliance with related environmental laws and regulations. The plan also is designed to ensure the maintenance of quality training lands for accomplishing Fort Greely's critical military mission.

## **Scope**

This plan applies to organizations internal and external to Fort Greely that are involved with, or interested in, the management or use of Fort Greely's

lands and natural resources. Plan application includes active duty units, National Guard and Reserve Components, directorates, private groups, and individuals. This INRMP is an integral part of the Fort Greely Installation Master Plan.

## **Relationship to the Military Mission**

Fort Greely is responsible for the combat training of most U.S. Army soldiers in Alaska. These soldiers are among the most specialized military professionals in the world and they train in some of the world's harshest environments. Fort Greely trains other members of the United States Department of Defense team, from Air Force bases across the nation, to Marines stationed in Hawaii and Okinawa, to Navy Seals. Members of other nations' armed

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<sup>2</sup>Robert M. Walker, Assistant Secretary of the Army, Testimony before Congress, July 11, 1995.

forces, including Canadians, British Special Air Services, and Russians, also undergo training at Fort Greely.

This INRMP supports the military mission by protecting and enhancing the training lands upon which the mission is critically dependent. The INRMP also describes recreational opportunities associated with natural resources, thus supporting the U.S. Army Alaska (USARAK) commitment to both the Quality of Life and the Communities of Excellence programs.

This INRMP describes impacts of military activities upon natural resources and means to mitigate these impacts. However, this INRMP does not evaluate Fort Greely's military mission, nor does it replace the requirement for environmental documentation of the military mission at Fort Greely.

## Environmental Compliance

This INRMP is required by the Sikes Act (16 U.S.C. 670a et seq. as amended November 1997), Department of Defense Directive 4715.3 (*Environmental Conservation Program*), and Army Regulation 200-3 (*Natural Resources - Land, Forest, and Wildlife Management*). In addition, this INRMP helps ensure that USARAK complies with other federal and state laws, most notably laws associated with environmental documentation, wetlands, water quality, and wildlife management in general. This plan describes how USARAK will implement provisions of Army Regulation (AR) 200-3 and local regulations, most notably AR 190-13 (*Enforcement of Hunting, Trapping and Fishing on Army Lands in Alaska*) (U.S. Army, Alaska, 1994) and AR 350-2 (*Range Regulation*) (U.S. Army, Alaska, 1995).

This INRMP has the signatory approval of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), which acknowledges that the INRMP complies with the Endangered Species Act. Review of the INRMP is considered informal consultation with regard to the Endangered Species Act.

The Sikes Act, as amended in November 1997, requires that an INRMP include:

- ▶ Fish and wildlife management, land management, forest management, and fish- and wildlife-oriented recreation

- ▶ Fish and wildlife habitat enhancement or modifications
- ▶ Wetland protection, enhancement, and restoration where necessary for support of fish, wildlife, or plants
- ▶ Integration of, and consistency among, the various activities conducted under the plan
- ▶ Establishment of specific natural resource management goals and objectives and time frames for proposed action
- ▶ Sustainable use by the public of natural resources to the extent that the use is not inconsistent with the needs of fish and wildlife resources
- ▶ Public access for sustainable use of natural resources consistent with available fish and wildlife resources, subject to safety requirements and military security
- ▶ Enforcement of applicable natural resource laws (including regulations)
- ▶ No net loss in the capability of military installation lands to support the military mission of the installation
- ▶ Other activities the military deems appropriate
- ▶ Regular review of this INRMP and its effects, not less often than every five years
- ▶ Provisions for spending hunting and fishing permit fees exclusively for the protection, conservation, and the management of fish and wildlife, including habitat improvement, and related activities in accordance with the INRMP
- ▶ Exemption from procurement of services under Office of Management and Budget Circular A-76 and any of its successor circulars
- ▶ Priority for contracts involving implementation of this INRMP to state and federal agencies having responsibility for conservation of fish and wildlife

The *Fort Greely Resource Management Plan* (Bureau of Land Management and U.S. Army, 1994) requires that the Bureau of Land Management

(BLM) participates with the Army, USFWS, and Alaska Department of Fish and Game (ADF&G) in developing a Habitat Management Plan and will be a signatory agency in any revision of the Cooperative Agreement (required by the Sikes Act). This document also requires the Army to develop a Forest Management Plan and Recreation Activity Management Plan for withdrawn lands. This INRMP and corresponding activity plans satisfy the above BLM requirements.

## Ecosystem Status

Fort Greely has five recognized cover types: ice and snow; alpine tundra; moist tundra; open, low growing spruce forests; and closed spruce-hardwood forests (Viereck and Little, 1972). The installation has a wide variety of flora and fauna, none of which are classified as threatened or endangered. Fort Greely also provides habitat for the largest number of game species found on any military installation in the United States (BLM and U.S. Army, 1994). Although the natural resources program affects many species, moose (*Alces alces*), ruffed grouse (*Bonasa umbellus*), black bear (*Ursus americanus*), and bison (*Bison bison*) are the most intensively managed, largely due to the need to provide game species on a sustained basis.

The quality of both surface and groundwater is presumed to be good. There have been no indications of changes in the quality of surface water since Army occupation of the land, and there has been only minor pollution of groundwater in localized areas, none of which are thought to affect human health. Significant effects of military use on soils are evident primarily in the cantonment area. Trends in biological diversity are not documented. There is no reason to suggest that Army activity on the land has significantly affected biological diversity.

The installation clearly can support its current military mission. That capability is stable and may be increasing. The capability of the land to produce forest products has steadily improved since significant timber removal has not occurred and the forest is maturing, especially in areas where fires have been minimized.

The capability of the ecosystem to support hunting, fishing, and trapping continues to be good. Fishing op-

portunities have increased in some areas due to stocking. Agriculture is not a viable option on Fort Greely.

## Partnerships

This INRMP cannot be implemented by USARAK alone. In accordance with land withdrawal legislation and the ecosystem management philosophy, USARAK is forging partnerships with various agencies for managing its natural resources. Major partners are the BLM, USFWS, and the ADF&G. Other partners in this effort include the Alaska Department of Natural Resources (ADNR), universities, other federal and state agencies, private contractors, and private citizens.

## Plan Components

This INRMP outlines goals and objectives in five general areas: stewardship, military readiness, quality of life, compliance, and program integration. It describes Fort Greely's military mission, including the mission's impacts on natural resources and the effects of natural resources on conduct of the mission. The plan describes Fort Greely's climate, land base, facilities, and natural resources, including a brief history of natural resources management on the installation. Internal and external parties involved in implementation of this INRMP are listed.

The plan emphasizes ecosystem management, which is a departure from Fort Greely's traditional multiple-use approach. This change is consistent with recent changes in laws and Department of Army policies.

Ecosystem management will continue to allow the use of natural resources on Fort Greely for military and other human-related values and purposes. Ecosystem management has an over-riding goal of protecting the properties and functions of natural ecosystems. Since these ecosystems often extend beyond installation boundaries, management of Fort Greely's natural resources will include more emphasis on partnerships with its neighbors.

This plan is organized to promote integrated management of lands and natural resources. Ecosystem management chapters (11-16) describe overall natural resources management: Inventory and Monitor-

ing; Protection and Damage Prevention; Natural Resources Management; Awareness; and Enforcement.

Within the ecosystem management chapters are programs involving Integrated Training Area Management (ITAM), fish and wildlife management, integrated pest control, natural resources law enforcement, research programs, and conservation education. Additional chapters (17-21) describe outdoor recreation associated with natural resources, protection of cultural resources during natural resources management activities, application of the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) to conserve natural resources, and unresolved issues. A final chapter discusses specific measures to implement the plan.

## Planned Major New Initiatives

Fort Greely's INRMP includes a description of ongoing natural resources programs and projects. Most of these will either be continued or completed. The important new initiatives within this INRMP are listed below.

- ▶ Implement an ecosystem management philosophy
- ▶ Enhance inventory and monitoring programs for flora and fauna
- ▶ Complete an ecological land classification of Fort Greely
- ▶ Provide special protection for unique natural resources areas
- ▶ Implement a forest management program that supports the military mission and meet natural resources management goals
- ▶ Enhance wildlife habitat, especially for bison, ruffed grouse, and moose
- ▶ Rehabilitate damaged training lands
- ▶ Control erosion, especially that associated with roads
- ▶ Develop additional hunting, trapping, and fishing awareness materials for soldiers and their families
- ▶ Develop and implement a cultural resources management inventory and monitoring program

## Benefits and Costs

***Military Mission Benefits:*** Implementation of this plan will improve the quality of Fort Greely's training land. It will enhance mission realism by providing more options for training and more intensive military mission planning. It will improve the ability for long range planning at Fort Greely.

***Environmental Benefits:*** The plan establishes a basis for the conservation and protection of natural resources. It will help reduce vegetation loss and soil erosion due to military activities. It will reduce the potential for environmental pollution. It will protect water quality in riparian and aquatic ecosystems. It will provide biodiversity conservation. Plan implementation will increase knowledge of Fort Greely ecosystems through surveys and research.

***Other Benefits:*** Troop environmental awareness will be enhanced while training at Fort Greely. Both community relations and Fort Greely's environmental image, internal and external to the Department of Defense, will be enhanced. Quality of life for the Fort Greely community and its neighbors will be improved. Plan implementation will decrease long-term environmental costs and reduce personal and installation liabilities from noncompliance with environmental laws.

***Costs:*** It will cost about \$2,174,000 during 1998-2002 to implement this INRMP, or about \$0.66 per acre per year. The majority of funding will be provided from either environmental or training monies designated for implementing the ITAM program. Plan implementation will require staffing at the same level as in recent years, with exception of additional contract personnel to implement ITAM and other new programs. Most of the funding is required in Fiscal Year (FY) 1999.

## Summary

The actions within this INRMP will comply with environmental laws, conserve and protect Fort Greely's natural resources, improve Fort Greely's relationship with the public, and enhance the military mission. This plan will not resolve all existing and/or future environmental issues. It does, however, provide the guiding philosophy and means for working towards a resolution of such issues.